

Remarks

In furtherance of the Request for Continued Examination filed herewith, Applicants respectfully request consideration of the foregoing amendments, which are hereby submitted in accordance with 37 C.F.R. § 1.114. Upon entry of the foregoing amendment, claims 1, 9, 18, 36-41, 43-48, 58-62, and 68-83 are pending in the application, with claims 1, 18, 58, 68, 76, and 83 being the independent claims. Claims 2-8, 10-17, 19, and 21-35 were previously cancelled and claims 20, 42, 49-57, and 63-67 are now sought to be cancelled without prejudice to or disclaimer of the subject matter therein. Claims 1, 9, 18, 43-48, and 58 are sought to be amended. Claims 68-83 are sought to be added. These changes are believed to introduce no new matter, and their entry is respectfully requested.

Based on the above amendment and the following remarks, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider all outstanding objections and rejections and that they be withdrawn.

Allowable Claims 42, 49, 57, and 63

The Office Action states on page 10 (paragraph 24) that claims 42, 49, 57, and 63 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form, presuming other rejections of the corresponding base claims are overcome. Applicants wish to thank the Examiner for identifying these claims as allowable. Accordingly, Applicants have amended independent claims 1, 18, and 58 to include features of claims 42, 49, and 63. As amended, independent claims 1, 18, and 58 are in condition for allowance.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 101

On page 1 (paragraph 4) of the current Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 50-57 and 64-67 under 35 U.S.C. § 101 for allegedly being directed to non-statutory subject matter. According to the rejection, these claims are non-statutory because the claimed invention is not limited to tangible embodiments. Applicants respectfully disagree with this new USPTO position on patentability. However, in order to expedite prosecution, Applicants have cancelled these claims without prejudice to or disclaimer of the subject matter contained therein and will pursue the invention claimed therein in a continuing application. Thus, this rejection is moot. Reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection are respectfully requested.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 112

On page 5 (paragraph 5) of the current Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 50-57 and 64-67 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph, for allegedly lacking written description. In addition, on page 7 (paragraph 6) of the current Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 50-57 and 64-67 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph, for allegedly lacking enablement. These rejections appear to be rooted in the new USPTO position that every embodiment of the claimed invention must be tangible. Applicants have both described and enabled the claimed invention of claims 50-57 and 64-67. However, as stated above, Applicants have cancelled these claims without prejudice to or disclaimer of the subject matter contained therein and will pursue the invention claimed therein in a continuing application. Thus, this rejection is moot. Reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection are respectfully requested.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 103

On page 7 (paragraph 9) of the current Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 50-56 under U.S.C. § 103 as allegedly being unpatentable over U.S. Pat. No. 5,115,500 to Larsen (hereinafter, "Larsen") in view of U.S. Pat. No. 4,802,119 to Heene *et al.* (hereinafter, "Heene"), and further in view of Tanenbaum, *Structured Computer Organization*, 1984. As stated above, Applicants have cancelled these claims without prejudice to or disclaimer of the subject matter contained therein. Thus, this rejection is moot. Reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection are respectfully requested.

The current Office Action states on page 7 (paragraph 7) that claims 1, 9, 18, and 20 are rejected under U.S.C. § 103 as allegedly being unpatentable over Larsen in view of Heene. As noted above, Applicants have amended independent claims 1 and 18 to include features of allowable claims 42 and 49, respectively. Thus, as amended, claims 1 and 18 are allowable for at least the same reasons that claims 42 and 49 are allowable. Claim 9 depends from claim 1 and is therefore allowable for at least the same reasons that claim 1 is allowable. The features of claim 20 have been incorporated into claim 18. Applicants have therefore cancelled claim 20, rendering the rejection of claim 20 as moot. The preamble to claim 9 has been amended to be consistent with other claims that depend from claim 1. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1, 9, and 18, are respectfully requested.

On page 8 of the current Office Action, in paragraph 11, the Examiner rejected new claims 36-49 and 57-67 under U.S.C. § 103 as allegedly being unpatentable over Larsen in view of Heene. As stated previously, Applicants have cancelled claims 42, 49, 57, and 63-67, rendering the rejection of these claims moot. Claims 42, 49, 57, and 63 were inadvertently listed in this rejection, as claims 42, 49, 57, and 63 are specifically indicated as

being allowable by the Examiner in the current Office Action on page 10, paragraph 24, for example. As noted above, Applicants have amended independent claim 58 to include features of allowable claim 63. Thus, as amended, claim 58 is allowable for at least the same reasons that claim 63 is allowable. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of claim 58 are respectfully requested.

With respect to the remaining claims, claims 36-41, 43-48, and 59-62 depend from amended independent claims 1, 18, and 58, respectively, and are therefore allowable for at least the same reasons that claims 1, 18, and 58 are allowable. The dependencies of claims 43-48 have been amended from cancelled claim 20 to claim 18. Thus, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of claims 36-41, 43-48, and 59-62 are respectfully requested.

New Claims 68-83

Applicants have added new claims 68-83. New claims 68-83 are similar to claims 1, 9, 18, 36-41, 43-48, and 58, except that address comparisons are accomplished in parallel instead of sequentially. Support for this feature can be found, for example, in the paragraph beginning on page 41, line 18, of the present application. Entry, consideration, and allowance of new claims 68-83 are respectfully requested.

Information Disclosure Statement

Applicants are submitting concurrently herewith an Information Disclosure Statement. It is respectfully requested that the Examiner initial and return a copy of the accompanying Form PTO-1449, and indicate in the official file wrapper of this patent application that the documents have been considered.

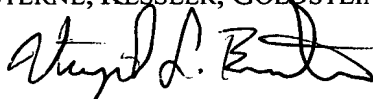
Conclusion

All of the stated grounds of objection and rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. Applicants therefore respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider all presently outstanding objections and rejections and that they be withdrawn. Applicants believe that a full and complete reply has been made to the outstanding Office Action and, as such, the present application is in condition for allowance. If the Examiner believes, for any reason, that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the number provided.

Prompt and favorable consideration of this Amendment and Reply is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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